



Long-Range Plan | 2022 – 2026

Approved by the Board of Trustees, 27 January 2022

Mission

The Town of Ulster Public Library connects people, ideas, information, and technology, to enrich lives and strengthen our community.

Vision

The Town of Ulster Public Library aspires to be a responsive and welcoming oasis of opportunity and civility – providing enrichment, education, and entertainment for all.

2021 Town of Ulster Public Library
Turning Outward Team
Anne Davis, President, Board of Trustees
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Introduction

The Town of Ulster Public Library, located at 860 Ulster Avenue in Kingston, New York, was established as a Special District Library by an act of the New York State Legislature in 1989, though we began serving the community decades earlier. Funded by the residents of the Town of Ulster (population 12,660, Census 2020) the Library also receives support from the Ulster County Legislature, through the Ulster County Library Association, currently for digital materials and electronic resources. As the Library is part of the Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) patrons have access to millions of books and other resources as well as borrowing and visiting privileges at the consortium's sixty-six member libraries in five counties. The Library receives funding from New York State as well as federal monies through MHLS both directly and via grants. Finally, donations from people like you allow the Library to develop special collections, keep up with changing technology needs, improve and grow our physical space, and provide programs supporting the interests of our community.

Planning Process

Looking Back and Achievements: In 2016, the Town of Ulster Public Library Board of Trustees approved a Plan of Service in accordance with New York State library standards. That plan informed decisions, helping the Library set priorities on matters like spending, programs, and facilities expansion. In every area, goals set forth in 2016 have been reached, including the addition of the Reading Room, a separate, potentially quiet, space for both Library and community use.

The Process: Five years later, it is time to create a new plan of service to help us achieve our goals and fulfill our mission. The planning process relies on several streams of information including laws and regulations that relate to libraries, best-practices for libraries developed by professionals in the field, and finally, and most critically, directly from people in the community who support and use the library, and those who do not but might.

To gather input from residents of the Town of Ulster, the Library assembled a team of trustees and staff to participate in Turning Outward, a program developed by the Harwood Institute and the American Library Association and facilitated by the Mid-Hudson Library System. After several training sessions and a little practice, the team held a series of virtual and in-person community conversations throughout the spring and summer of 2021. During the conversations, encouraged by questions and dialogue, the concerns and aspirations of Town residents were heard, then later distilled into distinct themes, which were used to examine our values and develop goals and actions. In addition to the community conversations, two surveys provided information about the specific interests, needs, and priorities of current library users as well as the attitudes and aspirations of staff and trustees.

Challenges: The emergence of Covid-19 brought sudden and unexpected disruption and the Town of Ulster Public Library responded by developing new ways to deliver resources and services to our patrons. While a pandemic and the need to shift everything drastically and quickly was not anticipated in the 2016 plan, the Library was able to continue addressing basic functions because of the foundation built on the Library's core mission and vision. This new plan aims to reinforce that foundation by synthesizing what we know and what we have learned with changing considerations and emerging realities.

Evaluation and Review

The Director and President of the Board of Trustees will review the plan on an annual basis, evaluate the progress in each area and report to the Board of Trustees.

Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

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Values

Access: We acknowledge individual needs, experiences, and cultures, and are committed to fair and inclusive access and opportunity so every person in our community can thrive. We believe in removing barriers to information and access and in creating spaces that are open to all including those with invisible needs and disabilities. We recognize the inherent dignity in each person and provide space where everyone can be themselves.

Inclusion and Equity: We affirm the rights of patrons to equal and equitable access to library materials. We aim to create a welcoming and comfortable environment where the diverse values, backgrounds, experiences, and cultures in our community are appreciated, represented, supported, and celebrated. We welcome and serve everyone.

Stewardship and Accountability: We respect the need for ethical fiscal and environmental sustainability and take seriously our responsibility as stewards of public funds. We are accountable to our community and take pride in our commitment to honesty and transparency. We understand that every decision we make affects how people experience the library; our goal is to deliver an exceptional experience.

Service Excellence: Service is at the core of everything we do, and we hold ourselves to the highest standard. We are committed to courteous and knowledgeable service and aim to provide positive and welcoming experiences to our patrons and to each other, in a warm and accessible environment.

Curiosity and Learning: We believe in intellectual and artistic curiosity. We engage patrons of all ages by providing opportunities for discovery, inspiration, and growth. We recognize the importance of literacy and believe continuous learning enriches people's lives and increases opportunities. We provide the tools to help individuals achieve their goals and to live, adapt, and thrive in a constantly changing world.

Innovation: We foster a culture of exploration and innovation by creating environments that support learning and growth. We continually seek new and better ways to serve our patrons and community, anticipating change and responding quickly. We embrace the library's role as a community force and empower staff to adapt to emerging needs. We endeavor to lead in the development and delivery of creative, high-quality library services.

Commitment to Staff: We encourage and value staff — they are our greatest resource. We strive to create a climate of employee engagement, success, curiosity, and support. We are passionate, have fun, work together as a team, and respect our individual talents and skills.

Community: We believe in connection and the power of belonging. We are an active presence in the community, establishing and maintaining partnerships to provide everyone with chances to thrive and grow. We bring people together to gather and share information, ideas, and experiences. We are your neighbors.

Themes, Goals, Actions

Theme: Longevity

Goal: The library will approach each interaction and decision with the future in mind.

Potential areas of action: sustainability, diversity, equity, staffing, reviewing standards

Actions

- Connect Board of Trustees to ongoing training, education, resources, and opportunities
- Connect staff to ongoing training, education, resources and opportunities
- Work to increase staff wages and benefits to approach community wage comparability
- Develop and encourage a Friends of the Library group or similar support base

Theme: Collections

Goal: The library will maintain and grow both a physical and an electronic collection of materials to enlighten and entertain the people of the community.

Potential areas of action: physical and electronic materials, weeding to make room for collection growth, Library of Things, expanding scope

Actions

- Use a variety of sources to develop a diverse collection of materials without censor
- Explore the development of relevant special collections, like materials with a local focus

Theme: Facilities

Goal: The library will provide an appropriate physical space for its needs.

Potential areas of action: all indoor and outdoor areas and spaces, sustainability

Actions

- Develop a welcoming outdoor space
- Reconfigure the indoor space to address the changing needs of the community and staff
- Update indoor finishes and fixtures
- Address maintenance and upkeep issues, inside and out

Theme: Technology

Goal: The library will provide access and guidance to the digital tools and training required in the 21st century.

Potential areas of action: communications, digital literacy, access in and out of the Library, engaging digital navigators, patron privacy

Actions

- updating communication tools as much as practical and possible
- updating digital access tools for patrons as much as practical and possible
- developing digital literacy training programs

Theme: Opportunity

Goal: The library will seek to provide avenues for education and enrichment.

Potential areas of action: communications, programming, outreach partnerships, sustainability

Actions

- continue collaboration with local schools for literacy and Summer Reading programs
- provide early literacy programs, like story hours, to foster a love of learning
- continue collaborations with local groups, like Ulster Hose Co., and 4H; seek new partnerships